

Fly



My beloved readers, I recommend that you fly to the Pasadena Playhouse because an amazing experience awaits you. If history lessons were taught this way, there would be no high school dropouts. This play contains the elements that make for a great stage production. A magnificent cast, a stimulating and visually effective set, a compelling story and words and music that weave their way through a nostalgic space, not just within the unique period of history, but in a shared emotional connection that is palpable. *Fly* is the amazing story of the Tuskegee Airman who flew with courage and distinction during World War II.

The military accomplishments of these incredible men and women (whose images were sadly absent until the very end when photos of the actual soldiers were shown) are matched by the barriers they broke and the examples they set. *Fly* is such a sensitive, poignant vehicle for this unique glimpse into how black and white moved aside when faced with a common enemy. *Fly* does not make excuses, apologies or explanations. It lays out the circumstances and how those shared experiences impacted soldiers of the sky to soar beyond the stereotypes and misconceptions to the heart of what is truly important, especially when death is knocking on every door. *Fly* brings a rhythmic awareness to the story using dance to tap out the pent-up emotions of the men with precise wordless pain in every step.



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Fly transcends color and soars above dividing lines and away from prejudices toward a deeper understanding of what it meant to be black and white during that time. It uses humor to ride on top of the racial elephants in the room. *Fly* makes astute observations about bigotry and prejudice by going deeper under the surface to explore what is under the skins of these brave fighters. Universal fears are explored in unexpected ways, bringing illumination to the heart of the matter, like so many burning embers in a bonfire. By being vulnerable to one another, these men discovered they had more similarities than differences. Through the eyes of these soldiers, we see that history has many victims and racism can also be a common denominator that, once exposed, can be dissipated like fog, but only if both sides are willing to take an honest look at one another and themselves.

Putting centuries of hatred and fear behind us will never be easy. I don't know if it is even possible. Nevertheless, we all must keep trying to build those bridges and fill those gaps with compassion and understanding. *Fly* serves well as a celebration of Black History Month, and a reminder that we have come far, but will always have much further to go. Let's celebrate what these remarkable patriots did for all of us and be inspired, encouraged, moved and committed to doing what we can to follow the example of personal excellence that *Fly* offers. I give *Fly* five out of five theatre tickets.

